

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A physical distribution system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the physical distribution system comprising:

5 a physical distribution information server having a database in which diverse pieces of physical distribution information are stored, an information management module that registers and manages the physical distribution information in the database, and an information processing module that processes the physical distribution information and supplies the processed information to a predetermined information terminal;

10 a carrier information terminal having a tracing module that detects a current position of the transportation medium, a traced position notification module that notifies the detected current position to the physical distribution information server, and a first information notification module that notifies information with regard to a desired cargo input by the carrier to the physical distribution information server; and

15 a shipper information terminal having a second information notification module that notifies information with regard to a cargo of interest input by the shipper to the physical distribution information server and a display unit that is capable of displaying the information supplied from the information processing module,

20 wherein the information management module registers and occasionally updates the current position of the transportation medium notified by the traced position notification module as part of the physical

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distribution information, and registers the information notified by the first information notification module and the second information notification module as part of the physical distribution information,

5 the information management module retrieves the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium with regard to a carrier that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery of the shipper's cargo of interest,

10 the information processing module processes information representing a result of the retrieval, supplies the processed information to the shipper information terminal, and causes the processed information to be displayed on the display unit.

2. A physical distribution system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the physical distribution system comprising:

15 a physical distribution information server having a database in which diverse pieces of physical distribution information are stored, an information management module that registers and manages the physical distribution information in the database, and an information processing  
20 module that processes the physical distribution information and supplies the processed information to a predetermined information terminal;

a carrier information terminal having a tracing module that detects a current position of the transportation medium, a traced position notification module that notifies the detected current position to the physical distribution  
25 information server, a first information notification module that notifies

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information with regard to a desired cargo input by the carrier to the physical distribution information server, and a display unit that is capable of displaying the information supplied from the information processing module; and

5 a shipper information terminal having a second information notification module that notifies information with regard to a cargo of interest input by the shipper to the physical distribution information server,

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10 wherein the information management module registers and occasionally updates the current position of the transportation medium notified by the traced position notification module as part of the physical distribution information, and registers the information notified by the first information notification module and the second information notification module as part of the physical distribution information,

15 the information management module retrieves the physical distribution information to find an address of the shipper with regard to a cargo that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery by the carrier, as well as the current position of the transportation medium,

20 the information processing module processes information representing a result of the retrieval, supplies the processed information to the carrier information terminal, and causes the processed information to be displayed on the display unit.

3. A physical distribution system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the physical distribution system comprising:

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a physical distribution information server having a database in which diverse pieces of physical distribution information are stored, an information management module that registers and manages the physical distribution information in the database, and an information processing  
5 module that processes the physical distribution information and supplies the processed information to a predetermined information terminal;

10 a carrier information terminal having a tracing module that detects a current position of the transportation medium and a traced position notification module that notifies the detected current position to the physical distribution information server; and

15 a specific information terminal having a retrieval demand module that requires the physical distribution information server to retrieve a current location of a cargo being transported by the carrier in response to an instruction given by a specific person other than the carrier, and a display unit that is capable of displaying the information supplied from the information processing module,

20 wherein the information management module registers and occasionally updates the current position of the transportation medium notified by the traced position notification module as part of the physical distribution information,

the information management module retrieves the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium by the carrier in response to the requirement of retrieval from the retrieval demand module,

25 the information processing module processes information

representing a result of the retrieval, supplies the processed information to the specific information terminal, and causes the processed information to be displayed on the display unit.

5           4. A physical distribution system in accordance with any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the carrier information terminal is mounted on the transportation medium.

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10           5. A physical distribution system in accordance with any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the carrier information terminal has a first section and a second section that is separate from the first section, and

the first section includes at least the tracing module and the traced position notification module and is mounted on the transportation medium.

15           6. A physical distribution system in accordance with claim 3, the physical distribution system further comprising:

a password allocation module that allocates an inquiry password to the specific person; and

20           an accounting module that compares a password input into the specific information terminal by the specific person giving the requirement of retrieval with a password allocated in advance to the specific person and charges the specific person when the two passwords are coincident with each other,

25           wherein the information processing module supplies the processed information regarding the result of the retrieval to the specific information

terminal when the two passwords are coincident with each other.

7. A physical distribution system in accordance with either one of claims 3 and 6, wherein the specific person is either one of the recipient and  
5 the shipper.

8. A method of utilizing physical distribution information in the process of transporting a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the method  
10 comprising the steps of:

(a) detecting a current position of the transportation medium;

(b) registering and occasionally updating the detected current position of the transportation medium as part of the physical distribution information;  
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(c) registering information with regard to a desired cargo that the carrier wants to transport, as part of the physical distribution information;

(d) registering information with regard to a cargo of interest that the shipper requires transportation, as part of the physical distribution information;  
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(e) retrieving the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium with regard to a carrier that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery of the shipper's cargo of interest; and

(f) supplying information representing a result of the retrieval to the  
25 shipper.

9. A method of utilizing physical distribution information in the process of transporting a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the method  
5 comprising the steps of:

(a) detecting a current position of the transportation medium;

(b) registering and occasionally updating the detected current position of the transportation medium as part of the physical distribution information;

10 (c) registering information with regard to a desired cargo that the carrier wants to transport, as part of the physical distribution information;

(d) registering information with regard to a cargo of interest that the shipper requires transportation, as part of the physical distribution information;

15 (e) retrieving the physical distribution information to find an address of the shipper with regard to a cargo that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery by the carrier, as well as the current position of the transportation medium by the carrier; and

(f) supplying information representing a result of the retrieval to the  
20 carrier.

10. A method of utilizing physical distribution information in the process of transporting a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the method  
25 comprising the steps of:

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(a) detecting a current position of the transportation medium;

(b) registering and occasionally updating the detected current position of the transportation medium as part of the physical distribution information;

5 (c) retrieving the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium by the carrier in response to a requirement given by a specific person other than the carrier to retrieve a current location of a cargo being transported by the carrier; and

10 (d) supplying information representing a result of the retrieval to the specific person.

11. A physical distribution information server used in a physical distribution system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the physical distribution information server comprising:

15 a database in which diverse pieces of physical distribution information are stored;

an information management module that registers and manages the physical distribution information in the database; and

20 an information processing module that processes the physical distribution information and supplies the processed information,

wherein the information management module registers and occasionally updates a current position of the transportation medium notified by the carrier as part of the physical distribution information, and

25 registers information with regard to a desired cargo notified by the carrier



and information with regard to a cargo of interest notified by the shipper as part of the physical distribution information,

the information management module retrieves the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium with regard to a carrier that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery of the shipper's cargo of interest,

the information processing module processes information representing a result of the retrieval and supplies the processed information to the shipper.

12. A physical distribution information server used in a physical distribution system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the physical distribution information server comprising:

a database in which diverse pieces of physical distribution information are stored;

an information management module that registers and manages the physical distribution information in the database; and

an information processing module that processes the physical distribution information and supplies the processed information,

wherein the information management module registers and occasionally updates a current position of the transportation medium notified by the carrier as part of the physical distribution information, and registers information with regard to a desired cargo notified by the carrier and information with regard to a cargo of interest notified by the shipper as

part of the physical distribution information,

the information management module retrieves the physical distribution information to find an address of the shipper with regard to a cargo that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery by the carrier, as well as the current position of the transportation medium by the carrier,

the information processing module processes information representing a result of the retrieval and supplies the processed information to the carrier.

13. A physical distribution information server used in a physical distribution system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the physical distribution information server comprising:

a database in which diverse pieces of physical distribution information are stored;

an information management module that registers and manages the physical distribution information in the database; and

an information processing module that processes the physical distribution information and supplies the processed information,

wherein the information management module registers and occasionally updates a current position of the transportation medium notified by the carrier as part of the physical distribution information,

the information management module retrieves the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation

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medium by the carrier in response to a requirement given by a specific person other than the carrier to retrieve a current location of a cargo being transported by the carrier,

the information processing module processes information  
 5 representing a result of the retrieval and supplies the processed information to the specific person.

14. A method of remotely managing a physical distribution  
 information server in accordance with any one of claims 11 through 13 via a  
 10 network.

15. A carrier information terminal used in a physical distribution  
 system that transports a cargo from a shipper to a recipient by a  
 transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, the carrier  
 15 information terminal comprising:

a tracing module that detects a current position of the transportation  
 medium;

a traced position notification module that notifies the detected  
 current position to a server used in the physical distribution system;

20 an information notification module that notifies information with regard to a desired cargo input by the carrier to the server; and

a display unit that displays an address of the shipper with regard to  
 a cargo that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery by the  
 carrier as well as the current position of the transportation medium by the  
 25 carrier, based on the information supplied from the server.

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16. A carrier information terminal in accordance with claim 15, the carrier information terminal is mounted on the transportation medium.

5 17. A carrier information terminal in accordance with claim 15, the carrier information terminal having a first section and a second section that is separate from the first section,

wherein the first section includes at least the tracing module and the traced position notification module and is mounted on the transportation  
10 medium.

18. A computer readable recording medium in which a computer program for supplying various pieces of physical distribution information stored in a database is recorded, the computer program causing a computer  
15 to attain the functions of:

registering and occasionally updating a current position of a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, which is notified by the carrier, in the database as part of the physical distribution information, and registering information with regard to a desired cargo,  
20 which is notified by the carrier, and information with regard to a cargo of interest, which is notified by a shipper, as part of the physical distribution information;

retrieving the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium with regard to a carrier that satisfies  
25 a predetermined condition allowing delivery of the shipper's cargo of

interest; and

processing information representing a result of the retrieval and supplying the processed information to the shipper.

5 19. A computer readable recording medium in which a computer program for supplying various pieces of physical distribution information stored in a database is recorded, the computer program causing a computer to attain the functions of:

10 registering and occasionally updating a current position of a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, which is notified by the carrier, in the database as part of the physical distribution information, and registering information with regard to a desired cargo, which is notified by the carrier, and information with regard to a cargo of interest, which is notified by a shipper, as part of the physical distribution  
15 information;

retrieving the physical distribution information to find an address of the shipper with regard to a cargo that satisfies a predetermined condition allowing delivery by the carrier, as well as the current position of the transportation medium by the carrier; and

20 processing information representing a result of the retrieval and supplying the processed information to the carrier.

25 20. A computer readable recording medium in which a computer program for supplying various pieces of physical distribution information stored in a database is recorded, the computer program causing a computer

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to attain the functions of:

registering and occasionally updating a current position of a transportation medium operated or managed by a carrier, which is notified by the carrier, in the database as part of the physical distribution  
5 information;

retrieving the physical distribution information to find the current position of the transportation medium by the carrier in response to a requirement given by a specific person other than the carrier to retrieve a current location of a cargo being transported by the carrier; and

10 processing information representing a result of the retrieval and supplying the processed information to the specific person.

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